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## News Releases

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FEBRUARY 28, 2011 GREENBELT, MD

### **Self-described "militant extremist" sentenced to 5 years in prison for visa fraud Sentence enhanced based on statements and conduct indicating a desire to attack the United States**

GREENBELT, Md. - U.S. District Judge Roger W. Titus, sentenced Brahim Lajqi, 51, an ethnic Albanian from Kosovo, residing in Silver Spring, Md., today to five years in prison followed by three years of supervised release for visa fraud. Judge Titus granted the government's requested sentence enhancement based on Lajqi conducting activities to fulfill his pledge to retaliate against the United States for its involvement in the Kosovo conflict, which Lajqi believed had led to the deaths of several family members. The sentenced is the result of an investigation conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) and the FBI.

The sentence was announced by U.S. Attorney for the District of Maryland Rod J. Rosenstein; Special Agent in Charge William Winter of ICE HSI in Baltimore and Special Agent in Charge Richard A. McFeely of the FBI.

"The evidence showed that Mr. Lajqi repeatedly and consistently made statements and took actions indicating that he planned to engage in terrorist activity," said U.S. Attorney Rosenstein.

"As this case clearly demonstrates, visa fraud presents a vulnerability that could be exploited by dangerous criminals or even terrorists," said Special Agent in Charge Winter. "ICE HSI will continue to vigorously pursue those who seek to exploit and corrupt America's legal immigration system."

According to Lajqi's guilty plea, he made false statements on immigration documents. Lajqi admitted that on his application to become a permanent resident in the United States he stated that he had been granted asylum status, when in fact, he had not. Lajqi further admitted that he forged his mother's signature on a petition for an alien relative that was purportedly filed by her on his behalf.

According to court documents and evidence presented at today's sentencing hearing, Lajqi is a self-described extremist militant trained by Bosnian rebels, who on several occasions expressed a desire to "get even" with the United States and discussed obtaining weapons and explosives for an attack on Washington, D.C.

According to court documents, Lajqi drove around Washington, D.C., on two occasions to discuss and view potential targets, including Capitol Hill, the courthouse where his immigration proceedings were being held, the White House, the Treasury Building and a Metro Train Stop during rush hour. Lajqi also stated that he was in the process of renewing his commercial drivers license (CDL) in South Carolina so that he could transport weapons from Canada. Lajqi actually traveled to West Virginia in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a CDL there.

U.S. Attorney Rod J. Rosenstein commended ICE HSI and the FBI for their work in the investigation.

Mr. Rosenstein thanked Assistant U.S. Attorney Gregory Welsh, who prosecuted the case, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Harvey E. Eisenberg, Chief of the National Security Section, who supervised the case.

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